Re. Birth, the Bed-rock of Hindu Philosophy

One of the basic tenets of Shri Maharaj's talks is that the talks concern the visitor and the world at large - the true nature of what the individual considers as 'himself' and the nature of the phenomenal world. The talks are always on the basis of man-to-man, and no recourse is generally had, to be given by Shri Maharaj or by the visitor, to anything that any books however traditionally acceptable they may be. Indeed it is this pragmatic basis which is found so very honest by the true seeker as opposed to the student of Philosophy. In other words, the 'mere written word' - what Shri Maharaj refers to as 'hearsay' or 'general belief' - is not accepted as God's own truth even if it appears in the highest and most revered traditional texts. Among other advantages such an approach prevents the possibility of questions begging other questions, as in the case of one believer trying to make a believer of his friend telling him about that a particular 'man-of-God' being able to converse with angels, and when questioned about the veracity of such a claim, exclaims, "Would a man who is able to talk with angels tell a lie"?"!

The regular visitors to Shri Maharaj's little ashram are aware of the fact that he totally discards the concept of re-birth as impossible non-sense. But whenever a reference to this topic evokes an unequivocal response from Shri Maharaj, a new visitor is shocked beyond belief if he happens to subscribe to the Hindu religion. On one such occasion, a youngish visitor, dressed in the traditional ochre robes signifying his attachment to a certain Hindu sect, with the fires of fanaticism burning in his eyes, expressed his shock that Shri Maharaj would not accept "the principle of re-birth which was the very bed-rock of the Hindu Philosophy". He looked around for moral support from the other visitors but must have

been a little disarayed by the kindly smiles of understanding (but not acquiesence!) from quite a few of the regular visitors.

Shri Yabaraj looked at the young Sanyasi with a certain amount of sympathy for the misguided zeal of the young man, and said to him in an unusually kindly manner: "This statement of mine about re-birth being nonsence is nothing at all. You will be shocked even more, to the very marrow, if you continue to come here. I do not teach any Philosophy of any religion and I am not concerned with any traditional texts as basis for my talks. I talk only from direct experience since my Guru opened my eyes - my spiritual eyes. It is not my intention to hurt anybody's feelings. I, therefore, tell people that they are free to walk out if they do not like what they hear. What they would hear here would be direct truth as I have experienced it not as people would like to hear it."

Such an approach completely unnerved and fascinated the young man who humbly expressed his desire to continue to listen to Shri. Yabaraj.

Shri. Yabaraj continued: "Have you ever really given thought to the essential nature of man. Forget what you have read, what you have been told. Have you given any independent thought to this question; I repeat independent, quietly thorough and deep thought, as if you were the only sentient being on earth and there was no one else from you to guide you? What are the essentials to this that you consider as 'you'? Obviously the body - but this body that is now in its prime, healthy and strong was once only a little spot (or speak) of matter when conception took place in your mother's womb. Think: did 'you' do anything to be so conceived? did 'you' want to be conceived? were 'you' consulted? further, - and this is important - what is it that was 'latent' in that matter which was conceived, which caused that speck of matter to grow

into a fully-developed baby with blood, flesh, marrow, bones, muscle etc. first in your mother's womb, and thereafter in this world until it is now sitting before me, ~~talk~~ discussing philosophy? The body has, during its growth, assumed various images which you have considered as 'you' at different times, no single image has remained faithfully as 'you', and yet there is something which has remained without any change - is that not your sense of being alive, the consciousness which gives sentience to the physical-psychic apparatus known as the 'body'. That is given various names, being-ness, I-am-ness, Atma, etc. and also often names like Maya, God, etc. If this consciousness is there, then the world exists for you; if you are not conscious, as in deep-sleep, does the world exist for you?

"Now, do you get some idea of what it is that you think of yourself as 'you'? — this composite of the physical body, the life force (Prana) which is the active principle, and Consciousness which enables the physical senses to cognise. What you appear to be is the outer body, what you are is Consciousness.

"Now let us come back to your problem of re-birth. What is 'born', the objective body with subtle, causal, it will 'die', therefore it will be dissolved — i.e. irreversibly destroyed; the life force will leave the body and mingle with the air outside. The objective part of ~~the~~ what was once a sentient being will therefore be destroyed, never to be re-born. And consciousness is not an object, not a 'thing' at all - therefore, consciousness as something non-objective cannot be 'born', cannot 'die' and certainly cannot be 're-born'.

"These are the facts, are they not? — facts about the phenomenally manifested sentient being? a process of the functioning of the noumenon as manifestation of phenomena takes place — forms get created and forms get destroyed. Who is born? and who dies?"

"If this is so you may ask how does

the concept of Karma, causality and re-birth arise at all? The answer is that instead of accepting a phenomenon as a manifestation of the unmanifested, and thus an aspect of the non-phenomenal noumenon — and spontaneous phenomenal action as noumenal, non-volitional, non-identified 'living' — identification with a pseudo-entity ~~a phan~~ takes place, and a phantom with a supposed autonomous existence is created. This phantom is mistakenly supposed to have choice of decision and action. It is this phantom that is supposed to be born, to live, to suffer and to die, and it in this process, it is this phantom who becomes liable to the process of causality known as Karma accepts the supposed 'bondage' and seeks an imagined 'liberation'

Is it not clear now that on the natural process of the manifestation of phenomena is super-imposed ~~the~~ a phantom self with autonomous, independent existence and on this phantom self is loaded the ~~concept of the~~ resultant effects of the imagined ~~voluntary~~ volitional actions - i.e. Karma, bondage and re-birth!